



BILL RICHARDSON
GOVERNOR

State of New Mexico
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT
Office of the Secretary
Harold Runnels Building
1190 St. Francis Drive, P.O. Box 26110
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502-6110
Telephone (505) 827-2855
Fax (505) 827-2836



RON CURRY
SECRETARY

DERRITH WATCHMAN-MOORE
DEPUTY SECRETARY

January 17, 2006
Immediate Release

Contact: Adam Rankin, NMED Communications Director
Phone: (505) 827-0314

Environment Department's Occupational Health and Safety Bureau Investigates Construction Worker Fatality in Albuquerque

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department's (NMED) Occupational Health and Safety Bureau (OHSB) is investigating the death of a highway construction worker, whose asphalt roller plunged about 25 feet after passing through a concrete barrier and a retaining wall.

The accident happened at about 3 a.m. on Tuesday morning on an I-40 exit ramp onto Coors in Albuquerque. NMED investigators spent the day interviewing construction workers at the site, and over the next several days will conduct more interviews, review the contractor company's records and will also inspect the asphalt roller to determine if an equipment malfunction was the cause of the accident. A final report on the accident will likely take three to six months to complete.

"At this point in the investigation it is too early to determine if there is any fault to assign," said Jim Norton, Director of NMED's Environmental Protection Division, which oversees OHSB. "Right now, our thoughts are with the family and friends who are grieving over this terrible loss."

Between 1996 and 2005, there were 21 reported construction-related deaths in New Mexico. The construction industry has the second highest fatality rate of any industry in the state behind the oil and gas industry, which has 31 deaths over the same nine-year period.

Since 1975, New Mexico has been delegated the authority to oversee worker safety and health regulatory issues from the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

For more information, contact Adam Rankin, NMED Communications Director, at (505) 827-0314.

###